Conversations with a Medical Examiner:

Autopsies & Other Testing

Welcome & Housekeeping

• Dr. Keith Pinckard, Travis County Chief Medical Examiner
• Amber Myers, Staff Attorney, TJCTC
• Sarah McKinney, JP Program Administrator, TJCTC
Today’s Webinar

Introduction  Prepared Material  Questions?

Dr. Keith Pinckard
Travis County Chief Medical Examiner
Can you explain a bit more about your facility?

We often just think about the Medical Examiners, but what other staff works at your office?
What kind of new equipment or software to help determine cause and manner of death does your team have access to?
Notes for X-Ray photos

What services can your office provide to JPs conducting inquests?
• Autopsy
  • Postmortem computed tomography scanning
  • External and Internal exam
  • All necessary testing, including toxicology
  • Report with opinion of cause and manner of death

• External Examination
  • Postmortem computed tomography scanning
  • External exam only (the body is not opened)
  • Toxicology testing not performed (except MVAs)
  • Report with opinion of cause and manner of death

• ONLY APPROPRIATE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF CASES
• Chart Review with Medical Opinion
  • The body is NOT transported to TCME
  • Review of circumstances and medical records
  • Report with opinion of cause and manner of death

• ONLY APPROPRIATE FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF CASES

What is the most common question you get asked by JPs?
Cause and Manner of Death Resources

• Cause of Death Reference Guide (smartphone app)
  • By Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
    https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mobile-app.htm

Cause and Manner of Death Resources

• National Center for Health Statistics Training on Writing Cause-of-Death Statements & other CDC Resources:
  https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/writing_cod_statements.htm
• National Center for Health Statistics Guidance on Certifying COVID-19 Deaths:
  https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvss/vsrg/vsrg03-508.pdf
• CDC “blue sheets” (natural deaths):
  https://www.dshs.texas.gov/uploadedFiles/Content/Chief_Operating_Officer/vs/field/TxEVER/blue_form.pdf
• CDC “red sheets” (unnatural deaths):
Updated Inquests Deskbook (2nd Ed.)

https://www.tjctc.org/tjctc-resources/Deskbooks.html

Cause and Manner of Death is discussed in Chapter 5 — pages 21-28

- On page 22 you will find a table of resources with links to help you in filling out death certificates

Contact Dr. Pinckard

- Travis County Medical Examiner’s Office
- https://www.traviscountytx.gov/medical-examiner
- 7723 Springdale Road
  Austin TX 78724
  Phone: (512) 854-9599
  Fax: (512) 854-9044
- email: Keith.Pinckard@traviscountytx.gov
Looking for more webinars on inquests?

• Join us on November 9th from 2-3pm when we welcome Dr. Janice Diaz-Cavalliery, El Paso County Deputy Medical Examiner.
• Visit our inquest month website for MORE dates with medical examiners from around the state.
• https://www.tjctc.org/inquestmonth.html